

REMARKS

The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 17, 2007. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 16 to 18 are in the application. Claims 1, 5 and 9 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that Claims 1, 2 and 16 are allowed.

Applicant also thanks Examiner Poon for his courtesies and thoughtful treatment afforded during a telephone conversation with Applicant's representative Michael Guzniczak (Reg. No.: 59,820) on May 8, 2007. Applicant's Statement of the Substance of the Interview follows.

Applicant's representative initially telephoned the Examiner to confirm whether Claims 1, 2 and 16 were allowed. In particular, the Office Action Summary indicated that Claims 1, 2 and 16 are rejected, whereas page 4 of the Office Action indicated that these claims are allowed. During the conversation, Examiner Poon confirmed that the Office Action Summary is incorrect, and that Claims 1, 2 and 16 are allowed.

However, Claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,377,744 (Wakui). During the telephone conversation, Applicant's representative asked why independent Claim 1 was allowed but independent Claims 5 and 9 were rejected, since Claims 5 and 9 are directed to a method and a storage medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1. Examiner

Poon explained that independent Claim 1 includes controllably embedding specific information into image data using a digital watermarking technique, whereas this feature was not found in independent Claims 5 and 9. Examiner Poon also tentatively indicated that if this feature was inserted into Claims 5 and 9, these claims would also be allowed.

Accordingly, Claims 5 and 9 have been amended to include the feature of controllably embedding the reproduced specific information into the reproduced image data using a digital watermarking technique. Withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Additionally, some editorial amendments have been made to the claims. These changes are simply to improve the clarity of the claim language, and are not believed to affect the allowability of the claims.

The Abstract has also been amended to more closely track the current language of independent Claim 1.

Therefore, in light of the foregoing amendments and remarks and the discussion at the interview, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests same.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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